

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.**  
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

#03-09139

## ***You Turn Back To Dust #2***

August 2, 2009

**(3) You turn man back into dust and say, “Return, O children of men.” (4) For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night.** (Psalm 90:3-4 NASB)

I thought I would make my point regarding these verses with one issue, but on second thought, it seemed appropriate to elaborate a little further.

#1: Death is not merely death of the mortal body but death of the person. David died, his body was placed in a tomb where it resides to this day, and he has not ascended to heaven. Only Jesus, the second David, died and rose from the grave to ascend to heaven (Acts 2:25-35). He alone possesses immortality (1 Timothy 6:16). No man since Adam, except the Man, possesses immortality.

#2: Death is likened to sleep of our mortal bodies. When we go to bed at night and close our eyes, we are shut out from all that is going on around us and in the world. Unless we have a dream, we have no recollection of our time asleep. We do not know anything during this time. This is what death is like. **The dead do not know anything** (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

The only way out of the state of death is through resurrection. One must be resurrected from death in order to have life once again. Only God can raise anyone from the dead. The ancients knew this and expected it. Take Job as an example.

**(11) “As water evaporates from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dried up, (12) so man lies down and does not rise. Until the heavens are no longer, he will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep. (13) Oh that You would hide me in Sheol, that You would conceal me until Your wrath returns to You, that You would set a limit for me and remember me! (14) If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my struggle I will wait until my change comes. (15) You will call, and I will answer You; You will long for the work of Your hands.”** (Job 14:11-15 NASB)

Job pondered the question that has hounded mankind since Adam. **“If a man dies, will he live again?”** But notice that Job answered his own question. **“I will wait until my change comes.”** One day, the Lord will call him forth from the grave just as Jesus called Lazarus to come forth from the grave (John 11:43). **“Job, come forth.”** Also, take note of Job’s reference to the heavens being no more, which must refer to Revelation 20:11 when the earth and heaven flee away in the presence of the great white throne. But there is more, for Job saw ahead to the day that His Redeemer would come to earth and, even though his body would decay, he, one day, would see God with physical eyes, that is, with eyes of an immortal body.

**“As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. (26) Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; (27) whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!”** (Job 19:25-27 NASB)

Oh, that our hearts would faint within with the thought of seeing our Redeemer through the eyes of immortal bodies! **When He appears, we will be like Him** (1 John 3:2).

#3: There are two resurrections, and all mankind, without exception, is destined for one of them. See issue #02-0838 (06-06-2008) *You Surely Will Not Die!*. The first resurrection or, as Paul called it, the **out-resurrection** (Philippians 3:11 WAET) is reserved only for those who will reign with Christ for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4-6). The rest of the dead will not come to life until the 1,000 years are completed. Notice that the Bible does not state that the rest of the dead remain in another form of life or are alive in some other place. It declares that they did not come to life, which means that they remain dead. It will take the second resurrection for them to come alive again, which is when the great and the small appear before the great white throne. This is the hour that Jesus spoke of and described as both the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment (John 5:28-29).

#4: Jesus now holds **the keys of death and Hades** (the unseen, not hell) (Revelation 1:18). Prior to the Cross of Calvary, death was an impenetrable tomb for all mankind. When man died, he was locked in the tomb of death with no possible way out, and no man, absolutely no man, can ever release himself from this tomb. Because of His perfect sacrificial death on the cross and the Father raising Him from among the dead, the Son of God, who is the Resurrection and the Life, now not only holds the key to life but the keys of death and Hades. It is only through Jesus, the Son of God, that any man, whether a believer or unbeliever, can rise from the dead. If Jesus does not call the dead forth, then the dead will remain dead. It is that simple. Jesus is the key.

#5: Death is the enemy of mankind, and Jesus alone has been charged with abolishing death, something that will take place when all things have been subjected under His feet.

**(25) For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. (26) The last enemy that will be abolished is death.** (1 Corinthians 15:25-26 NASB)

The very last thing that must take place before Jesus hands the kingdom over to His Father, **so that God may be all in all** (1 Corinthians 15:28), is the abolishment of the last enemy, death. In other words, for God the Father to be all in all and, I might add, to be all in all new, death, not only physical death but death of all kinds, must be abolished. Death cannot remain in the kingdom of God because God is the God of the living, not the dead (Mark 12:27).

#6: It seems that mankind has been programmed by God, so to speak, with a knowing that we were created to be immortal. This is why there is so much emphasis on the afterlife. Many religions of the world, including pagan religions, believe in some form of afterlife, even if it is reincarnation or some spirit or demonic life. Like Christianity, some believe there is a place the dead go to in their afterlife, whether it is called heaven, nirvana, paradise, or even hell, and that there are rewards. But the obsession with an afterlife does not stop with religions, for Hollywood movies are filled with references to an afterlife. In fact, there are many movies out today that are based on an afterlife. The challenge is that the Christian message has been lost in this maze of sensory overload and the true message of hope in resurrection through Christ has been lost, if not perverted. We need to be on the forefront of declaring that there is no such thing as an afterlife, as defined by life in death. Mankind's hope rests on being resurrected from the dead, and this is only possible through Jesus. **This Jesus God raised up again, raised from among the dead!** The only issue before each and every one born of Adam's race is whether the person will rise in the first or the second resurrection.

#7: Finally, I conclude with a further word about death being a sleep. We need to understand that mankind generally views life linearly, that is, on a timeline. We go from minute to minute, hour to hour, day to day, year to year. It is probably hard for most of us to fathom death as a sleep since, in our time-space continuum, being dead thousands of years and then being raised from the dead with one's personality and even memory intact seems too much to grasp. How is the essence of the person preserved in death, if one is truly dead? Of course, the basic answer is that with God all things are possible. He declares the end from the beginning, and all that He has spoken, He will bring to pass (Isaiah 46:10, 11). Given this truth, we also must realize that, although we are stuck in time, God is not. When a person falls asleep (dies), it is as if time is suspended, and it matters not how much time on man's timeline has passed. When the dead awake, it will be as if they died a second earlier. Imagine falling asleep and then being removed from time (or, time is suspended) and transported hundreds or thousands of years into the future, and then being awakened from sleep. Interestingly, there have been space movies based on this concept. I believe this is actually closer to the truth than most realize.